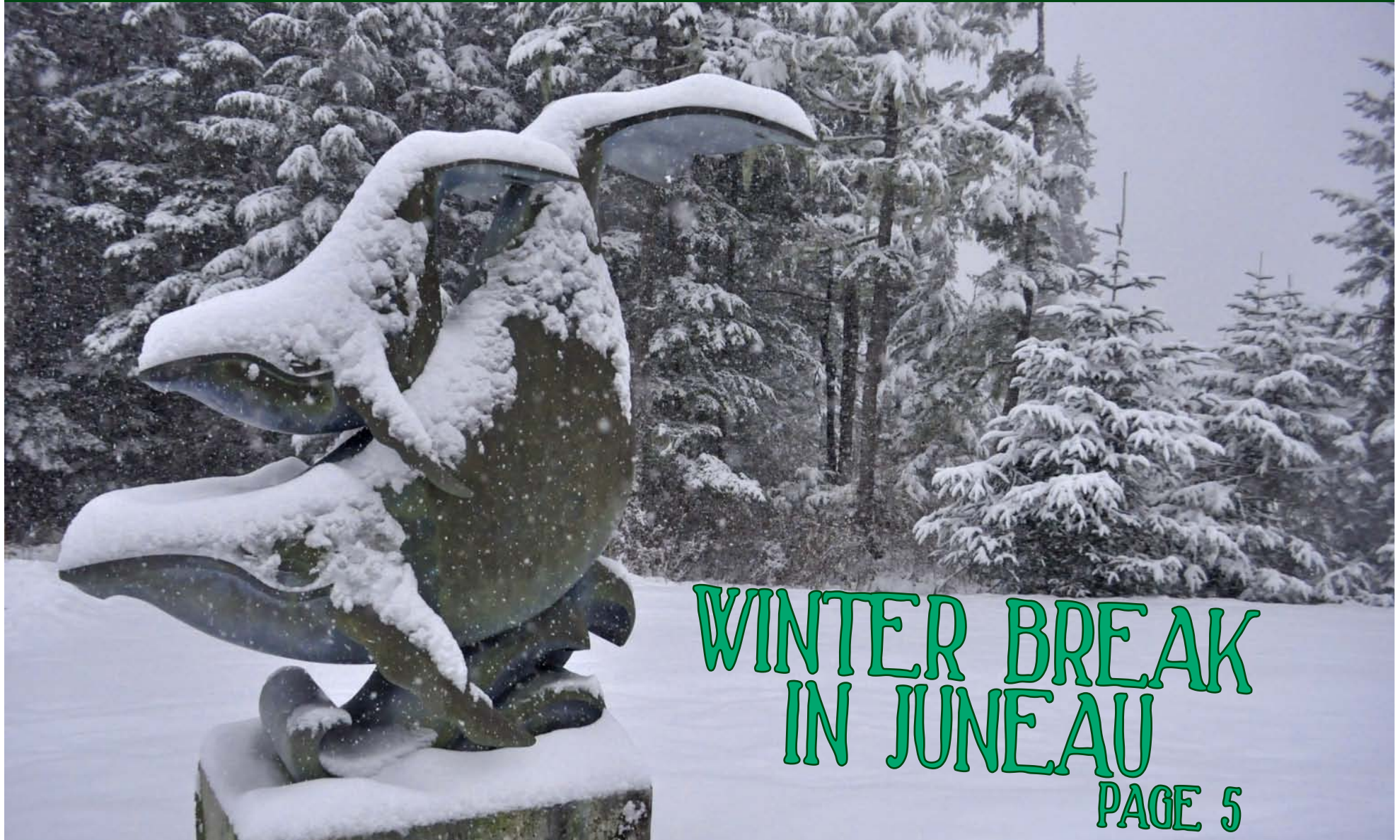


University of Alaska Southeast

# WHALESONG

December 8, 2014

The Official Student Newspaper of UAS



Study in France? Moi?  
Pourquoi Pas!  
Page 4

2014, 2015, and the  
Space in Between  
Page 10

Philosophical Traditions:  
The Ptolemaic System  
Page 13

# ON THE COVER...

*With the arrival of snow and finals on campus, it's hard to ignore that winter break is finally here! If you're planning on staying in Juneau for the holidays and don't really know what to do with the amount of free time you'll have, don't worry! There are plenty of things to do in town! If you need some fun recommendations, turn to page 5!*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Letter from the Editor
- 7 In Defense of Patriarchy & Zip "ZAP" Zop
- 10 Mourant Cafeteria's Namesake
- 12 Home-idays
- 14-15 Calendar & Comics!

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## — UAS Answers — *Everybody's got one ...* ***What's your favorite holiday movie?***



*"Home Alone!"*  
-Ryan Hicks & Sara Savage



*"Nightmare Before Christmas!"*  
-Taylee Escalante & Megan Eagle



*"A Christmas Story, because it's hilarious, has a BB gun, pajamas, tongues stuck to flag poles, and oh! Of course, giant snow suits!"*  
-Amanda Triplett

*"Noel, a cartoon from the 90s"*  
-Jennifer Sweitzer



# — UAS in Brief —

## A Letter from the Editor

Dear reader,

It's the final countdown! There are only five days left until school is officially out for the holidays! While you're taking a break from studying to read the *Whalesong*, I want to encourage you not to freak out. Instead of worrying about finals week, take a moment to reflect on everything you have accomplished this semester and all of the cool new things you have learned, in and out of the classroom. When I look back at this fall and the new issues of the *Whalesong* that have come out of it, I'm met with wonderful memories of the fun we've had here at UAS! There are so many moments to cherish and I encourage you to think of them now while we enter these exam periods, because those are the times in college that you'll remember when you walk away with your diploma!

Thank you for picking up a copy of the *Whalesong*. It means the world to me to walk around campus and see people reading the newspaper. If you happen to read an article and really like it, I would recommend saying something to the reporter; they put a lot of hard work into their writing and really enjoy hearing what you have to say! Express your opinion, especially if there is something you don't like about the newspaper or if there is something you want to see in future issues. After all, this is your newspaper! Please let us know what we can do to make it better for you!

Have a Merry Christmas!

*Chrystal Randolph, Managing Editor of the Whalesong*



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# — Study in France? Moi? Pourquoi Pas! —

**BY MEL SCRIVEN**

*For the UAS Whalesong*

Bonjour tout le monde! Mel Scriven here, writing from Angers, France. If we've never met before, hello! I am an English major in my third year at UAS, and this semester I am studying at Université Catholique de l'Ouest. Specifically, I am studying French at the university within the Centre International D'Etudes Français, or CIDEF for short.

Since it is an international program, at school I meet people from around the world. In my Langue class, where I spend nine hours a week, there are two other American students, and then students from China, Taiwan, and South Korea. Classes are taught all in French, with 18 hours of class a week. Learning a language with other international students opens up a door for us to communicate with each other, even if French is the only language we know besides our own. True, sometimes the conversations are awkward and the grammar is terrible, but we stumble through.

Angers is the capital of Maine-et-Loire, which is a part of the Pays de Loire region in western France. About 400,000 people live in the city and surrounding suburbs. I live in one of these suburbs, Le Ponts-de-Cé, around twenty minutes by bus from the center of town. Angers has a beautiful cathedral, as well as the Château d'Angers, home to the Apocalypse Tapestry, the largest ensemble of medieval tapestries in the world.

The French people I have talked to outside of Angers don't seem to see the appeal of studying there, as opposed to a larger city like Paris or Lyon. They've told me, "Angers est morte!" In other words, pretty boring. But I would disagree. Sure, it doesn't have as much to see and do as Paris. But there are still things to do. A circus came to town, there's currently a carnival finishing up with fair rides called Foire St. Martin, and a large Christmas market starts tomorrow. There's also the night life in Angers, which is not on a Paris level but is still fun. Bars are packed on Thursday nights, and most Friday nights, and can be a great way to meet young people living in the city.

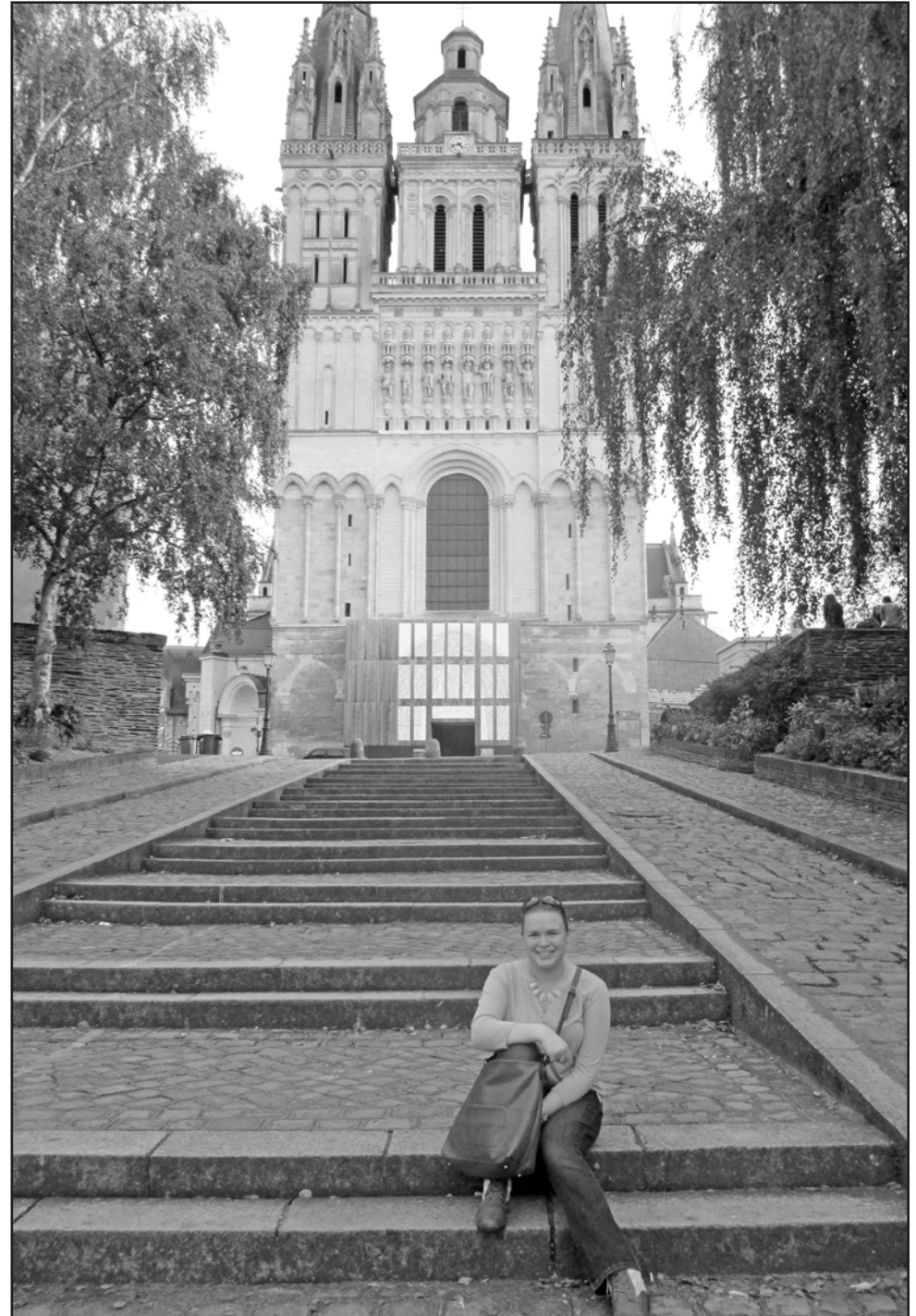
Living in a smaller city makes it feel more like home for me. I live with an older woman (my host mom) and another American student. My host mom, Annick, is really nice. She's helpful and welcoming. She doesn't speak English, but that means more opportunity to practice French!

I didn't realize that I had some expectations of what the culture would be like before I came. It's small things, or differences that I wouldn't have thought of, that make adjusting necessary. For example, it's very rude to not say bonjour when walking into a store, on a bus, meeting someone, etc. and you always say goodbye somehow. People take their time, and run on a different schedule. Generally restaurants aren't even open for dinner until seven in the evening, stores close on Sundays and most people stay home, making the city weirdly quiet. One stereotype that does ring true? People really do just carry around baguettes. I can't blame them though. It's delicious fresh bread, and it's not expensive. Why not?

One of my favorite things about France is probably the food. It is such a large part of the culture. Meals take time, and it's both rude and strange to see someone walking and eating at the same time. Some of the food takes time to get used to, like the stronger cheeses, but it's great getting to try new things. I recently had drinking chocolate at a café and it has to be my new favorite thing. You heard right. Drinking chocolate, not hot chocolate. It's much, much better.

This week has been a bit difficult. I sprained my ankle badly, ending up on crutches. I've now been to the doctor three separate times on this trip. Not everything is sunshine and wonderfulness on a study abroad. There is real studying to be done. Plus, with so much language immersion, sometimes I am extremely tired and don't want to hear another word of French. There are ups and downs, like any other semester, although the reasons why can be different than normal. However, the amazing things to see and learn make it more than worth it.

I'm so glad that I had the opportunity and decided to go on this trip. I get to



**UAS student, Mel Scriven, sits on the steps leading up to one of the many beautiful buildings she has visited during her time abroad in France this fall.**

**(Photo provided by Mel Scriven)**

see bits of history, learn a new language, and meet interesting people. It wasn't something I thought I'd be able to do, for multiple reasons. I wasn't sure I could afford it, and I wasn't sure I was confident enough to try something so different. Now I'm really looking into coming back as an English teaching assistant when I graduate! If you haven't looked into studying abroad because you don't think it's possible but would like to, please at least learn more about the opportunities available to you through UAS! It's worth it.

Bonne chance with the end of the semester, Joyeux Noël, and I'll see you in the spring, UAS! Au revoir!



# — Winter Break in Juneau —

**BY JASMINE MATTSON-WOLFF**

*For the UAS Whalesong*

Are you staying in Juneau over Winter Break? Looking for something new to do here? I've done some looking around and found some places in town that could cure the "having nothing to do" problem!

Eaglecrest Ski Area is Juneau's main hub for snowboarders and skiers in the winter. They are located in North Douglas and have buses that run Saturday, Sunday and school holidays for pick up & drop offs during the beginning and end of a ski day. They have a full rental shop, a bunny hill, and chair lifts, as well as a food court up the mountain for snow-lovers. There are a variety of passes available to purchase, from day and half-day passes to two day passes, and even seasonal passes! Eaglecrest is open 9 AM-3 PM Dec. 6th and 7th, Dec. 12-14th, and open daily through the holiday season starting Dec. 1 -Jan. 5th. You can find more information about Eaglecrest at [www.skijuneau.com](http://www.skijuneau.com)

Juneau also has two swimming pools and an ice rink that you can check out! The Treadwell Ice Arena is located in South Douglas by Sandy Beach and normally has 1 or 2 open skate times a day, along with other events like pond hockey and lessons for children. Costs for skating are \$6 Adults (18+), \$5 Youth (17&under) and \$4 Senior Admissions, with a skate rental fee of \$2.25. There are two pools here in Juneau, The Augustus Brown Swimming Pool, downtown by Juneau Douglas High School and the Diamond Park Aquatic Center, in the valley by Thunder Mountain High

School. The Augustus Brown and Diamond Park pools have good rates—children can get in for about \$4 and adults can get in for about \$6. Another place that is open to the public, especially youth though, is the Zach Gordon Youth Center. It is located downtown, by the JAHG. They are open daily with activities for youth ranging from ping pong, music, arts and crafts, indoor basketball, and a climbing wall, among other things. Youth are free to enter and adults can pay \$6.30 for use of the weight room, climbing wall, or racquet ball court. You can find more information and specific schedules on these places at [www.juneau.org/parkrec/](http://www.juneau.org/parkrec/).

Are you into ice climbing? But is it too cold for you to get out there and climb the glaciers? Fear not! We have The Rock Dump here in Juneau! Needless to say, it is a fabulous facility for climbing walls. The Rock Dump is located past downtown Juneau on Thane Road (I'd suggest going to their website for directions if you've never been there before). They are open on the weekends from 2-10 PM and on the weekdays from 4-10 PM. The day pass costs are as follows: Adults \$13, kids \$10, kids 5 and under \$5, and rental shoes cost \$3. If you are interested and would like more information visit [www.rockdump.com](http://www.rockdump.com).

Another awesome idea for something out of the ordinary to do over break would definitely be geocaching! It's pretty much a huge world-wide treasure hunt. To be completely honest with you, I think it's the coolest thing since sliced bread. Whether you are staying in Juneau, going home, or traveling around the world, it would be a fun adventure to have! Basically, what geocaching consists of is navigating to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then

attempting to find the geocache (container) hidden in that area. The containers are like the treasure chest of the game, some are small, some are large, some have lots of stuff in them some don't. The rule of thumb though on these little scavenger hunts is that if you take something from the geocache, you leave something of equal or greater value. At every geocache location there is also a logbook, sometimes actually that is the biggest thing there. Every time you go hunt down a geocache you are supposed to write your name and your find. At every new geocache it is a mystery what you will find because you have no idea what the owner of the geocache or previous visitors have left for you to find. Check out [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) for more information!

If you are a Tlingit Language learner there are also activities going on through the break here in Juneau that you could attend to keep you on your toes with the language. There are community meetings every Monday night from 6-7 PM at the downtown library's main conference room, for community members learning or interested in learning Tlingit. The only time that this event doesn't take place is if the library is closed. There are also gatherings at the Northern Light Church every other Saturday. If you have any questions about these events drop by the NRSC or contact language professor Lance Twitchell, [latwitchell@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:latwitchell@uas.alaska.edu), for more information.

It's really easy to find information on these places and activities going on in Juneau, so don't hesitate to check out the websites or contact them with any questions you might have! I hope everyone has a radical Winter Break!

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# — In Defense of Patriarchy —

**BY DANIEL PISCOYA**

*For the UAS Whalesong*

One of the biggest perks of taking upper division English classes—such as this semester’s resurrection of ENGL 418: Advanced Themes in Literature as our very own Zombies! class—is that you sometimes get to watch movies. One of the movies that I was introduced to via Zombies! was George A. Romero’s *Day of the Dead*, which I had only heard stories about. Apart from the over-the-top gore that Romero began to be known for, this movie was an incredibly well done socio-political character sketch. One character in particular will always remain in my mind as an excellent example of a face of the mid-1980s. That character is Captain Henry Rhodes. Captain Rhodes’ insane assertions of power—from his efforts to cease more theoretical research on the zombie to his threatening the lives of some of the last capable scientists on earth—are characteristic of a term that began to surface in the 1960s and 70s, that we are very familiar with now: the patriarchy.

The patriarchy, which is a common term in feminist theory, is a name given to the social structures and mechanisms which oppress women. It is an intentionally broad term, but one, I think, nonetheless applicable to our Captain Rhodes. In fact, to apply the term to Rhodes can open up an exploration of how this structure in society can harm men as well. However, this is beside my point.

It occurred to me while watching the movie, that Rhodes’ actions are performed with an unspoken invocation of authority.

Rhodes is only able to threaten the lives of his men and the scientists because no one out-ranks him in his direct sphere of influence. He resembles a child who denies his sibling a toy because “momma said I could have it”, or some such appeal. While Rhodes barrels on stubbornly to the end with this power, I would like to imagine what it would’ve been like if someone who out-ranked Rhodes had shown up. Perhaps, like a child caught in his half-lie justification for not sharing, Rhodes would have cowered or tried in vain to justify his actions before submitting to the higher authority. Perhaps he would have tried to defy the authority. Perhaps he might even have been humbled. But my point is that in this sketch ‘the patriarch’ is distinct from patriarchy. The patriarchy can never live up to its name. Inasmuch as the patriarchy is a misuse of authority to oppress women, it can never bear to submit to authority. In fact, it tries to become it. In short, men of the patriarchy will never admit that they were children, or that they had a father.

This distinction is important because it is important to recognize that words change. What now has a connotation of domination was once simply, “A form of social organization in which the father or oldest male is the head of the family, and descent and relationship are reckoned through the male line” (Oxford English Dictionary). “The patriarchy” is at once the same word as—and markedly different from—the term “patriarchy”. The two should not be mistaken for each other. Patriarchy is a remembrance of the father. The patriarchy is a kind of forgetting. It is because of this that I defend patri-

archy—not because I believe it to be perfect—but because the term has been appropriated by feminist theory to name something that it is not.

The consequences of defending the term against its recent connotation are these: that, without the name of “patriarchy,” the societal structures that feminist theorists sought to critique are robbed of their unity. Suddenly, the massive hand of “the patriarchy” becomes unveiled for the few prideful men and historical traditions that it is. If a woman does not want doors opened for her, it is not the patriarchy that she despises, but 1950s courtesies—and those are much easier to critique. If a woman wishes to run for political office, it is not the patriarchy which will be the most difficult challenge, but rather the voters. Take away all broad definitions, and you get the human face.

If Captain Rhodes would have stood, with his rank, medals, and combat boots, and pointed his gun at the head of every person in that underground bunker and said: “You’re all in hell—and I’m the devil!” the sanest person in the room might have replied, “No, you’re not the devil...you’re practice.”

In regards to oppression, we should all strive for that sanity.

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**Oxford English Dictionary.** Oxford University Press. Web. <[www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)>.

# — Zip “ZAP” Zop —

**BY ALEXA CHERRY**

*For the UAS Whalesong*

Until recently, I’m sure you only thought of “zap” as a cool sound effect, generally associated with lasers and electricity. But I’m here to give you another way to think of it – as an acronym! ZAP stands for the Zimbabwe Artists Project, which recently came to UAS in the form of an art show and sale. You might have seen the setup in the bottom floor of the Egan Library if you were there during the time of November 18th through November 20th; all of that art was for sale, and all of it was made by artists from the rural area of Weya in Eastern Zimbabwe. While a few of the pieces were done by men, most of the artists were women – subsistence farmers and mothers using their creativity to fund their households and help afford health care for their families and education for their children. These are the goals of the artists themselves; the goal of the Zimbabwe Artists Project, according to the pamphlet I picked up during my visit, is to support artists’ accomplishments while helping customers see “common humanity across boundaries of culture and privilege.”

Some of the art has specific purposes; for example, one artist, Nerissa Mugadza, created an appliqué inspired by her struggles with her granddaughter, who has cerebral palsy. The proceeds from the piece went towards getting her granddaughter a special needs stroller to help her get around. Even if they don’t have specific purposes, each piece of art shows a part of life from that area of the world – whether it be a selection from day-to-day life, or a folk tale from their culture.

ZAP also participates in community projects, perhaps the most notable being its assistance to victims of HIV and AIDS. They ensure that HIV positive artists have continual access to health care and medicine; they also help the one million plus children who have been orphaned by AIDS, providing money that can help pay for school fees and uniforms.

I actually learned something pretty interesting about the process through which ZAP acquires the money to do these things! The woman organizing the art show (whose name I have forgotten, and for December 8, 2014

which I am incredibly apologetic) explained that all of the art on display had already been paid for. If I had bought any of it, my money would have gone towards next year’s art show – funding supplies for creating more art, paying for plane tickets to go get the art and bring it back to America, etc.

If you didn’t get an opportunity to view the art show, don’t worry – I took some pictures, both of the setup and of a couple pieces of art I found particularly interesting.



**Pictured: The Saddle-Billed Stork by Tima Shonge (left) and In the Forest by David Tendai Chigumira (right). Photos by Whalesong reporter, Alexa Cherry.**



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# 2014, 2015, and the Space in Between

**BY ALEXA CHERRY**

*For the UAS Whalesong*

I've had some experience in the realm of resolutions, and I've come to the conclusion that figuring them out before January 1st is better than doing so on or after that date. December 31st and January 1st are the days when everyone starts asking that age-old question, "What's your new year's resolution?" As such, these are also inevitably the days when you have to single-handedly plan out the entirety of the following year on the spot. Confronted by judgmental friends and family members who already know exactly what they want to improve or change about themselves in the next 365 days, you have two options. Option A is to smugly brush nonexistent dust off your shirt and inform them that you don't have any resolutions because you're already perfect; this option is not recommended, however, as it can backfire with them either slapping or laughing at you. If you feel comfortable with your ability to handle that, go ahead; if not, however, then you might be forced to go with Option B, which is to make something up. This is also not the best move, since your family and friends might take you seriously on that resolution to "eat healthier" and yell at you every time they see you furtively sneaking Lunchables into your grocery cart at the store.

That's why you should start early on figuring out your resolutions! Contemplate what you've done in 2014 and decide what you want to do or improve upon in 2015. The great thing about new year's resolutions is that you don't have to share them with people – at least, not all of them. Furtively coding your resolutions is acceptable, as well. You can tell your parents you've resolved to spend more time studying in the library next year; what you mean is that you really want to work harder in your classes and bump up your quavering GPA, but since sharing your grades with your parents isn't mandatory in college, you don't have to tell them that. That's one resolution you'd better stick to, though, because there's a certain point at which they'll find out and probably send you to Antarctica – which, though it might not seem like it at times, is significantly worse weather-wise than Alaska.

It's also perfectly acceptable to have cheesy, redundant resolutions. If you resolve to work out more, good for you! Don't let people tease you out of it just because "everybody says that." Ignore those people. Stand strong, like you will be at the end of 2015 after pumping all that iron in the gym, or whatever it is people do there. I'm not a gym aficionado myself; if you ever saw a girl twirling one of the lighter weight bars around in the Rec Center while making kung-fu battle movie noises, that was probably me. Fortunately, I stopped before my arms gave out. Anyway, my point is that if you want to resolve to do something next year, go ahead and make that resolution, even if it's not particularly unique.

Tricking yourself by making resolutions that you can't avoid fulfilling is a nifty method as well. Are you taking the Argentine Tango class being offered next semester? Make one of your resolutions "learn to dance." By the end of Spring 2015 semester, you've fulfilled one of your resolutions, putting you ahead of most people! This is a completely valid method that makes you feel confident and capable in your skills as a person. I would say anything that makes you feel good is a good thing to do, but I'm leery about making that statement; I mean, I don't think there are any serial killers lurking about the UAS campus, but just in case – you know, maybe re-evaluate what makes you feel good. Knitting is a constructive, challenging hobby that you might find fascinating. Just a thought.

Finally, a trap that many people fall into is that of making too many resolutions. This is okay if they're all small, easily attainable goals – finish a season of that TV show, eat at a specific restaurant, hug your mother – but if you've got a list of 10 or 15 of the usual huge, over-arching goals for the year that lack specific guidelines (work out more, eat healthier, be more social), you're going to be overwhelmed before you even start. I suggest making your list of resolutions – as many as you want, to begin with – and then cut that list down to the five that are the most important to you. This might seem hard, but bear in mind that you can always come back to the other ones! Just because you didn't resolve to do them at the beginning of the year doesn't mean you can't come back to them later. These are just the ones you want to accomplish first. Once you've got your five, try paring them down to even smaller resolutions. "Work out more" can become "get a gym membership" – or, in the case of UAS students, set a time to go to the Rec Center every week. "Develop a workout plan" can also be part of this. You see what I'm doing here? Of course you do. You're not in college for nothing.

So there you have my take on new year's resolutions. Start now, rather than later, and you'll be ahead of the pack when January rolls around – not to mention more likely to actually fulfill your resolutions, which in turn will fulfill you.

# Mourant Cafeteria's Namesake

**BY JASMINE MATTSON-WOLFF**

*For the UAS Whalesong*

Mourant, Soboleff, Anderson, Novatney, Egan; up until recently I haven't given much thought into the names of our buildings here on campus. For me, they just describe where my fellow students and I could be on campus. I'd say that for most students they could be called "Empty Nouns," sure we know that they represent a building—but if that is the case, then why don't we just name them by number or letter? 1,2,3, or A, B, C? Why do they have the names they do? Well, I've decided to do a little research on the people who the buildings are named after and share my findings. It's important to be knowledgeable about the places you inhabit often, that way if someone asks you a question pertaining to a place you have plenty of interesting information to share with them. So, without further ado, who was Mourant named after?

Rob Mourant was a typical teenage kid, with enormous amounts of enthusiasm for his passions, and leadership skills of someone beyond his years. He was a student of both UAA and UAS. In 1981, Rob graduated from the University of Alaska Southeast with a Bachelor's in Business Administration. Rob was always known for being a leader and for being into politics. He aspired to one day, maybe even be Governor of Alaska. During his time in school he helped organize Student Government associations. He was elected the first student body president of UAA when he was there, and here at UAS. Being pretty enthusiastically involved in politics and being the first student body president of both schools isn't super surprising, but Rob went even further in his passions of politics and helping students. The cafeteria building here at UAS and the UAA commons building would not have been around so quickly if it hadn't been for Rob's actions as a founding member of the statewide Alaska Student Lobby. He showed his friends, family, and peers around him what could happen when you genuinely get to know the local government and put work into what you are lobbying for.

From the articles I found, it was easy to see how Rob became the young man he did. Rob's parents were Louise and Bob Mourant, and they were full of strong opinions and not shy about sharing them. They were very high spirited people, could laugh at old family memories, or discuss tough subjects while keeping a level head. They had two other children besides Rob; Randy and Roxy. Rob's younger brother passed away after a surgery, at the age of 20, two years before Rob's death. The family went through turmoil in the early 80s but Rob's sister, Roxy, recalls growing up on Auke Lake with fond memories. Rob and his siblings were always doing something on the lake, activities such as sailing, scuba diving, or ice skating. By sixth grade, Rob was already 6-foot-2 and with his personality and passions, he was always believed to be older than he actually was.

Rob married Sandy Riddell, daughter of dentist Norman Riddell. Riddell had retired and was working on developing a fish hatchery of Chichagof Island. In the summer of 1981, Rob and Riddell, along with his son and wife were on a research trip 60 miles south of Sitka, Alaska, at Little Port Walter. Riddell was piloting the plane when it crashed on the way back to Sitka with all four of them onboard. The plane and its passengers were never found after extensive searching. Sandy was left alone with her and Rob's infant son, Ryan, and in the fall of 1981 moved to Anacortes, WA to live with her mother. She remarried and now has four children including Ryan. The family visited UAS in 1999, 18 years after Rob's death. Sandy said that it was a little dream come true to come back to Juneau and show her family where she grew up, she said that despite it being immensely difficult to move on from the tragedy in 1981, coming back, "It's kind of a happy ending in a way. To think that 18 years later, there is some light at the end of the tunnel and life goes on."

So my fellow *Whalesong* readers, Rob Mourant is who the cafeteria building here at UAS is named after. A leader, politically progressive, inspiring young graduate of UAS who tragically lost his life helping his new in-law family research for yet another good and proactive addition to this beautiful place we call home. I believe that it would make sense to say that young Rob Mourant's life was no story of a tragedy nor is that how he would want to be remembered; Rob Mourant's life was an inspiration to help your fellow student and our common place, enjoy what you are doing in life, and create a thriving prosperous place for everyone.

I leave you with this quote in mind:

*"The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal! The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach."*

—Benjamin Mays



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# — Home-ids —

**BY ALEXA CHERRY**

*For the UAS Whalesong*

Christmas break is a fantastic time of year. Even if you don't celebrate Christmas, what's not to like? You don't have any homework, you get to give and receive presents, there's a cultural reason for consuming all the cookies and peppermint-flavored everything you could possibly want, and you get to spend time with friends and family. Going home is a part of this, which seems great at first but is quickly revealed to be actually kind of strange. I don't really know how to explain it, but I will try my best. Imagine you're an astronaut, okay? No, don't walk away, come with me on this journey. You're an astronaut, and your ship has just crash-landed on an alien planet. Everything looks exactly like Earth – there are even humans. Even your family is there, with their house, and for some reason there's not another version of you and they're delighted to see you. But you can't shake the overwhelming sensation that something is different, something you can't quite put your finger on.

Look, I don't know. All I know is that the first time I came home for break, everything was

weird. I was excited to be home, but I also wasn't sure where I was allowed to sit or what I was allowed to do. I started asking if it was okay for me to eat and drink stuff in the fridge, I felt uncomfortable sleeping in – I started doing visitor stuff instead of I live here stuff. Maybe this experience isn't the same for everyone, but I'm just letting you know right now that it might be kind of weird. Even if you're further on in your college experience and already know what I'm talking about, I'll just remind you – it might be weird.

Part of this is the disconnect between environments. In college, you pretty much do what you want and are your own person. Then you get home, and it's back to the "my house, my rules" environment of your childhood and teen years. Probably the thing I struggle with most is staying up late; at school I keep all kinds of hours, to the incredulity of my early-bird roommates. When I get home, I want to stay downstairs and play video games on the TV until 4 AM just because I can. However, my father gets up at 4 AM to go to work, and I live in deep-seated fear of his judgment should he come down expecting to experience a morning of solitude with his coffee and peer into the living room to find me sitting on the

floor, surrounded by empty soda cans and looking incredibly guilty as I clutch my PS3 controller while my video game character shanks an NPC through the chest. I have in fact made significant progress through the story, but to my father it just looks like I've been up all night wreaking virtual havoc and giving him an excuse to mock me later in the day when I complain about being tired. I know that there is no reason for my guilt – I don't have academic or work responsibilities, I can stay up until 4 AM if I want to – but that doesn't change the fact that I inevitably shut down all late-night frolicking and scurry upstairs by 3 AM at the latest.

If you've grown concerned while reading this article, don't worry – this sensation of weird disconnect only lasts for about the first week, and then you start lounging around like an oversized house-cat and complaining when your parents ask you to please load the dishwasher. They might even yell at you for messing up rooms they painstakingly cleaned in preparation for your return, and then you'll really feel like you're at home. It's probably easier if you have siblings, too – then your parents have to divide their attention, so you'll feel less like you're in their direct line of

(potential) fire. That's the thing – you have this lurking concern that you could still get in trouble, but at this point, all that can really happen is that your parents will get mad at you. And honestly, that's bad enough. You're at school 8 months out of the year – more if you work somewhere else during the summer – and the last thing you probably want when you finally get to hang out with your family again is for them to be angry with you. That's the last thing they want too, so after you get comfortable being home again, the holiday season is generally infused with a lovely air of togetherness and seasonal spirit that is the driving force behind my capacity to survive the fall semester. The "X days until Christmas!" thing that you did when you were 10 comes back in full force by the time you're in college.

So hang in there, kids! We get to go home soon enough, and when we do there will be loving family members and peppermint coffee and excited pets waiting to greet us. Ultimately, feeling awkward for a couple of days will be worth the rest of the time we spend on Christmas break. Plus, let's be honest – we're all going to spend the first couple of days sleeping. Anyone who says differently is kidding themselves.

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# — Philosophical Traditions: The Ptolemaic System —

**BY DANIEL PISCOYA**

*For the UAS Whalesong*

The latest blockbuster hit, *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan and starring Matthew McConaughey, Anne Hathaway, Jessica Chastain, and Michael Caine, was an excellently vast human drama depicting the destiny of the human race if Earth ever became uninhabitable. What I would like to focus on, however, is simply one pervasive element in the film—not only in how it concerns the cosmos as we think of it now, but how it carries with it the cosmos as we used to think of it. I would like to focus on the score. The official soundtrack to Nolan's *Interstellar* was composed by the renowned Hans Zimmer, who also worked with Nolan on his *Dark Knight* Trilogy. Like the intense brooding score that fit the character of the Batman so well, Zimmer has recalled something in our past and embedded it to great affect in our present. That is, tasked with composing a score to the vast dangers of outer space, the man turned to—of all things—a pipe organ.

In the last issue of the *Whalesong*, I elaborated on the development of the Ptolemaic system, or the geocentric model of the universe. This was a universe developed inter-disciplinarily, consciously, and over a vast period of time. It was a finite system, and one that was much more luminous than our own—it was not filled with infinite darkness and vacuum like our modern understanding, but rather with light and “the music of the spheres”. It was as entrancing as clockwork, and it was easy for medieval scholars to fancy God a divine watchmaker.

Many people think that the Earth being at the center was a symptom of some sort of human pride—that we thought of ourselves as the most important thing in the universe. But, studying the

model more closely, the central point was not the most important, in the sense that it was the center of attention, but rather was the most privileged in the sense that it was the best vantage point. To be a human on Earth in the Ptolemaic system was to be in awe: the universe was a grand Cathedral, and you were given a front pew.

This sense of awe—echoed in Nolan's *Interstellar*—is, I think, the key element to the philosophy behind the Ptolemaic system. The universe was as beautiful as a grandfather clock, and had within it all the levity of the merry-go-rounds we used to play on as children—and, all things be told, it was a little disappointing to be in the middle.

The prevalence of dream-literature alludes to this disappointment. Cicero's *The Dream of Scipio* recalls a general whose grandfather greets him in a vision and carries him up into the Heavens to show him what it will be like after death. From that lofty perspective, all the wars of the Earth seem like trifles, and the Roman Empire which he holds so dear is a miniscule part of the Earth. The Earth itself is completely dwarfed by the stars. Often in these dream-visions, the dreamer wakes up unafraid of death. We merely adopted the dark, but what would be more terrible than to be confined forever in it on this terrestrial sphere? Or worse, under it, where Hell was said to be?

The philosophy of the Ptolemaic system, then, is one of profound humility: that everything is ordered, and we are ordered to the lowest place. It is one of challenge: “mount to the heights!” it seems to say. Ultimately, it is also one of hope: as the old hymn goes, “soon the storms of time shall cease.” It is an ethos of awe and endurance. We stand to gain that much from a system which was forgotten with the advent of the telescope.

G.K. Chesterton once said, in his Father Brown story, “The



Hammer of God”, that “one sees great things from the valley, but only small things from the height” Perhaps, as is the constant reflection of films like *Interstellar*, we stand to lose our sense of humanity if too long we consider the vacuum of space. Where the temptation of the Ptolemaic system was one of pride, surely the temptation of the Copernican system is one of nihilism in the face of the infinite darkness. Where a medieval scholar may have watched the stars in awe, let us not, however, watch them in fear and tremble over our puny existence. Rather, like *Interstellar*, let us confront reality with a brave face, and not gently pass into that good night.

## — Slightly Awkward at Egan —

**BY ALEXA CHERRY**

*For the UAS Whalesong*

Just before Thanksgiving break, UAS hosted its final Evening at Egan event – a panel seminar for discussing racism. I was interested in attending this because two of my professors this semester were on the panel, and also because a kind librarian had invited me to attend after she heard me fervently arguing with my friends at Spike's Café regarding the presence of racism in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* series. So, on November 21st, I bundled myself up and marched down from housing to campus to attend “A Year of Rethinking Racism in Juneau: Reflection and Discussion.”

Making my way through the Egan building to the bottom floor of the library, I stood near the stairs and observed the setup of the room in confusion. A series of round tables had been set up, around which people were seated with pamphlets. I observed this situation with confusion, having been under the impression that Evening at Egan were hour-plus lectures generally delivered to intellectual members of the Juneau community and students in search of enlightenment and/or extra credit.

“Seems like a weird setup for a lecture,” I commented loudly, at which point someone standing nearby informed me that it was December 8, 2014

going to be a heavily interactive, discussion-based event. I stared at them and contemplated fleeing back up the stairs and into the night. This is where the “awkward” part of my title comes in; it seemed like a highly risky move to open a forum where the general public could discuss such a touchy topic at length. Furthermore, I wasn't sure that I was comfortable discussing said topic outside of my immediate friend group – and I didn't see any of my friends there. Fortunately, in the midst of my internal screaming, a friend from my honors class descended the staircase, and we found a table we could sit at together. Ultimately, this strategic move was pointless, since we were later asked to rotate amongst tables – but it's the initial thought that counts.

I am pleased to be able to report that my early concerns were mostly unfounded. The event was hosted by a panel of UAS faculty – Lance Twitchell, Amanda Sesko, Sol Neely, and Kolene James – who did a fantastic job presenting the topic at hand with helpful PowerPoint presentations and acknowledgements of the sensitivity of the issue. The awkwardness returned when they finished and asked people to have discussions at their respective tables; it seemed to permeate the room, no one willing to be the first to speak up. Fortunately, our intrepid leaders had anticipated this; they mentioned that they had provided bottles of water and even “quiet rooms” for people if conversations became too

difficult or intense for them, and this seemed to encourage some people to open up.

We had two discussion topics – the first was on racism in academia and its presence (or lack) thereof, and the second was a two-part question: what would you like to see happen in Juneau in the next 10 years to alleviate racism, and how can we make that become a reality? Having subconsciously anticipated some yelling, crying, and possibly table-flipping, I'm happy to announce that none of that happened! (To the best of my knowledge – I can't speak to the crying, though I feel like I would have noticed yelling and the flipping of tables.) Everyone was very mature and well-spoken, and had interesting opinions and stories to share!

Overall, I would rate this experience a successful one that was worth my time, as well as that of everyone who attended. Despite my initial trepidation at its interactive nature, I think it worked better as a discussion-based seminar than as a lecture-based one; with a lecture, everyone has to sit and listen to the opinions of a select few people, but as a discussion, people could contribute their own thoughts and feelings rather than sitting on them and letting them build up internally. Racism is certainly an awkward and delicate topic, but it was handled very well, and I look forward to future Evening at Egan discussions!

UAS WHALESONG

# CAMPUS CALENDAR

## OFF CAMPUS

MONDAY, DEC. 8

**Taku Toastmasters Club**, 12:05 p.m., Federal Building. Improve your public speaking skills in a supportive environment. Newcomers welcome! Meetings are held in Room 541 of the Federal Building. For more information, contact Velja at 907-321-4988.

TUESDAY, DEC. 9

**Governor's Open House**, 3 p.m., Downtown Juneau. Visitors will be able to meet the state's first couple. Holiday goodies and hot apple cider will be provided. For more information, call Erika Fagerstrom, manager of the Governor's House, at 907-465-3500.

**Painting pARTy "Angel,"** 6:30 p.m., Louise Miller Fine Art Studio. Come with

your friends or meet new ones as we focus on learning how to paint with palette knives. The Angels take shape right before your very eyes! All painting supplies, brushes, knives, paints and a canvas will be provided. Feel free to bring a simple snack to enjoy. pARTies are BYOB, but we will have cups, plates and a cork screw available. Classes are taught in acrylics with your choice of canvas, so you will go home with a fun, finished piece of art. \$25/per student. Contact Louise Miller at 789-3546 or [louisemillerfineart@gmail.com](mailto:louisemillerfineart@gmail.com) for more information.

**Mudrooms**, 7 p.m., Northern Light United Church. Theme: Accidents Happen. Come listen to storytellers Crystal Hudak, Libby Bakalar, Maia Wolf, Bill Dillon, Paul DeSloover, Michael Orr, and Seth Smith. Music performed by Joe Clark. Cost to attend is \$7, all profits go to AWARE. For more information, send an email to [mudrooms.juneau@gmail.com](mailto:mudrooms.juneau@gmail.com).

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 10

**Write For Your Life**, 10 a.m., Mendenhall Valley Library. The "Write For Your Life" group meets from 10-11 a.m. every Wednesday to share journal entries, memoir, letters, or poetry. For more information, contact Dixie at 907-789-2068.

THURSDAY, DEC. 11

**Community Gaming Night**, 5:30 p.m., Udder Culture. Shouldn't Juneau have a community gaming group? Of course! Now we do! This is an open video game group that gets together every week at Udder Culture. We play a variety of video games and are open to playing on any platform (Wii, PS3, PS4, Xbox360, Xbox One, etc.). Be sure to stop by and enjoy great food and company at the Udder Culture as well! All ages are welcome! (If you are a minor you will need to get a parent's permission to play, because we play a lot of games rated "M") Contact Greg Frank for more information at [greg.r.frank@gmail.com](mailto:greg.r.frank@gmail.com).

FRIDAY, DEC. 12

**Organ Concert**, 12 p.m., State Office Building Atrium. Concerts on the Kimball Theatre Organ at the State Office Building take place most Fridays during the noon hour.

**Juneau Student Symphony Winter Concert**, 7:15 p.m., Harborview Elementary Gymnasium. The Juneau Student Symphony presents its Winter concerts on December 11 and 12. Under the direction of JSS conductor, Tyree Pini, their program will feature favorite classics both holiday and not! Also featured is the newly formed String Orchestra. The string orchestra is made up of beginning string players while the student symphony is a full orchestra made up of student musicians of all ages. Bring the whole family for a fun evening of music and holiday cheer! On the program: Sleigh Ride, Shaker Variants, We Wish You a Merry Christmas, Hornpipe, Variations on a Quaker Hymn, Emperor Waltzes, Winter from the Four Seasons, St. Anthony Chorale. All Juneau Student Symphony performances are pay-as-you-can.

## Alaska Robotics



## Keyboard Gunk



# CAMPUS CALENDAR

## ON CAMPUS

### MONDAY, DEC. 8

**Final Exam Week**, All Day, Recreation Center. Finals Week for the Fall 2014 Semester will run from December 8-13. Visit the Fall schedule for a complete list of the finals schedule. For more information, send an email to [provost@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:provost@uas.alaska.edu) or call 796-6486.

**Bookstore: Used Book Buy-Back**, All Day, UAS Bookstore in Juneau. Used Book Buy-back for the Fall 2014 Semester text books runs from December 8-13. Bookstore is closed on Sunday. For more information, send an email to [bookstore@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:bookstore@uas.alaska.edu) or call 796-6401.

### TUESDAY, DEC. 9

**DOT&PF Open House**, 4 p.m., Glacier View Room. Opportunity for corridor residents and other interested members of the public to learn about latest project design and specific impacts to individual properties. For more information, send an email to [hilary.lindh@alaska.gov](mailto:hilary.lindh@alaska.gov) or call 907-465-6564.

### MONDAY, DEC. 15

**Deadline for Spring Admissions**, All Day, UAS. This is the last day to apply for Spring 2015 admission at UAS. For more information, send an email to [admissions@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:admissions@uas.alaska.edu).

### WEDNESDAY, DEC. 17

**Grades Due by Noon**, 12 p.m., UAS. Final grades posted for the Fall 2014 semester on UAOnline. For more information, send an email to [registrar@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:registrar@uas.alaska.edu).

### FRIDAY, DEC. 19

**Native Olympics Practice & Competition**, 6 p.m., Recreation Center. Strength training since time immemorial! "They (Native Olympic events) originated from the northern part of Alaska probably more than 2,000 years ago. The [Native] people from the interior of Alaska created a series of games to teach their kids important survival skills." Ricardo Worl. We'll practice jumping, strength, and endurance events such as but not limited to: one foot high kick, scissor broad jump, one arm reach, seal hop, leg wrestling, and stick pull. For more information, call the NRSC at 796-6454 or send an email to [nrsc@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:nrsc@uas.alaska.edu).

December 8, 2014

duration events such as but not limited to: one foot high kick, scissor broad jump, one arm reach, seal hop, leg wrestling, and stick pull. For more information, call the NRSC at 796-6454 or send an email to [nrsc@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:nrsc@uas.alaska.edu).

### WEDNESDAY, DEC. 24

**Winter Break**, All Day, UAS. Main campus closes at 5 p.m. on December 23 and will remain closed through January 4. Some services may have reduced hours, such as student housing/lodge services and the REC Center on the Juneau campus. Please check departmental websites for a full list of holiday hours.

### TUESDAY, JAN. 7

**Tuition & Fees Due for Spring Semester**, All Day, UAS. Registration after this date requires full payment. For more information, send an email to [cashier@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:cashier@uas.alaska.edu) or call 796-6267.

### WEDNESDAY, JAN. 8

**Housing Move In**, All Day, Juneau Campus. Move in for new and returning students. You can visit the housing website for more information, call 796-6528, or send an email to [housing.activities@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:housing.activities@uas.alaska.edu).

### THURSDAY, JAN. 9

**New & Transfer Student Orientation**, All Day, UAS. The University of Alaska Southeast strongly believes that the orientation process assists all new students in their transition to UAS and increases their chances for academic success. For more information, send an email to [admissions@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:admissions@uas.alaska.edu).

### TUESDAY, JAN. 14

**Web Registration Ends at Midnight for Short-Term Classes**, All Day, UAS. Deadline to add short-term classes to your schedule for Spring 2015. For more information, send an email to [registrar@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:registrar@uas.alaska.edu) or call 796-6267.

### THURSDAY, JAN. 16

**Native Olympics Practice & Competition**, 6 p.m., Recreation Center. Strength training since time immemorial! "They (Native Olympic events) originated

from the northern part of Alaska probably more than 2,000 years ago. The [Native] people from the interior of Alaska created a series of games to teach their kids important survival skills." Ricardo Worl. We'll practice jumping, strength, and endurance events such as but not limited to: one foot high kick, scissor broad jump, one arm reach, seal hop, leg wrestling, and stick pull. For more information, call the NRSC at 796-6454 or send an email to [nrsc@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:nrsc@uas.alaska.edu).

### SATURDAY, JAN. 18

**Web Registration Ends at Midnight for Full-Term Classes**, All Day, UAS. Deadline to add full-term classes to your schedule for Spring 2015. For more information, send an email to [registrar@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:registrar@uas.alaska.edu) or call 796-6267.

### SUNDAY, JAN. 19

**Alaska Civil Rights Day**, All Day, UAS. Campus closed. Some UAS offices will be open limited hours to include Juneau housing/lodge services.

### MONDAY, JAN. 20

**Deadline to Return Spring Text Books**, All Day, UAS. For more information on book returns, visit the Juneau bookstore website or send an email to [bookstore@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:bookstore@uas.alaska.edu) or call 796-6401.

### MONDAY, JAN. 27

**Deadline for 100% Tuition & Fees Refund for Full-Term Classes**, All Day, UAS. For more information send an email to [registrar@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:registrar@uas.alaska.edu) or call 796-6100.

**Deadline to Change Credit or Audit for Full-Term Classes**, All Day, UAS. For more information send an email to [registrar@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:registrar@uas.alaska.edu) or call 796-6100.

**"Liquid Sunshine": Berry Smoothies & Vitamin D**, 1 p.m., Maurant Building. Have a Berry Smoothie on us! We'll have information related to the health benefits of drinking berry smoothies and making Vitamin D apart of your daily nutrition! Contact the Native & Rural Student Center for more information by phone at 796-6454

or send an email to [nrsc@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:nrsc@uas.alaska.edu).

### TUESDAY, JAN. 28

**Withdraw Period Begins for Full-Term Courses**, All Day, UAS. For more information send an email to [registrar@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:registrar@uas.alaska.edu) or call 796-6100.

### SATURDAY, FEB. 1

**Deadline for Spring Graduation Application**, All Day, UAS. For graduation information, or the graduation application, visit the graduation website. For more information send an email to [registrar@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:registrar@uas.alaska.edu) or call 796-6100.

**Superbowl Party**, 2 p.m., Recreation Center. Watch the big game on the big screen! Sunday, Feb. 1—kick-off at 2:30 p.m. Free to all UAS Students. Pizza, Snacks, and prizes! For more information call 796-6569 or send an email to [alumni@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:alumni@uas.alaska.edu).

### SUNDAY, FEB. 2

**Summer 2015 Class Schedule Available for View on UAS Website**, 8 a.m., Online.

### THURSDAY, FEB. 20

**Food Sovereignty Fridays**, 1 p.m., Maurant Building. The Native and Rural Student Center invites UAS Students, Staff, and Faculty to stop by and sample some of the most amazing food harvested from around our wonderful State! NRSC Staff and Guests will share the significance and process of harvesting! See you at the NRSC! Contact the Native & Rural Student Center for more information by phone at 796-6454 or send an email to [nrsc@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:nrsc@uas.alaska.edu).

**Native Olympics Practice & Competition**, 6 p.m., Recreation Center. Strength training since time immemorial! "They (Native Olympic events) originated from the northern part of Alaska probably more than 2,000 years ago. The [Native] people from the interior of Alaska created a series of games to teach their kids important survival skills." Ricardo Worl. We'll practice jumping, strength, and endurance events such as but not limited to: one foot high kick, scissor broad jump, one arm reach, seal hop, leg wrestling, and stick pull. For more information, send an email to [nrsc@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:nrsc@uas.alaska.edu).



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